

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

0228

February 22, 2012

Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

We want to express our full support of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) proposed rule to have broadcast stations make political files publicly available online and we urge you to implement these proposed rule changes as soon as possible. With campaign season in full swing and new Super PACs springing up weekly, the public must have access to information about who is funding these ads.

Currently, broadcast stations are required to make the public inspection file, including the political file regarding campaign ads, available to the public in paper form only. Taking the additional step of having these documents available online would create transparency in a time of increasing campaign-finance secrecy. The information in these files should be available in an online, searchable database, and disclosures should include information about the people and organizations that purchase political advertisements.

With the 2012 election season already underway, citizens have a right to know who is purchasing public airtime to support or oppose candidates. More people rely on TV stations for information than any other medium, making transparency in advertising critically important. However, the creators of campaign ads often hide behind confusing organizational names that do not provide adequate information about who is actually paying for the ads, or worse, can actually mislead the public about the identity or purpose of the advertisement. This problem is compounded by the Citizens United decision and the proliferation of Super PACs. The online posting of information in broadcast stations' political file cannot wait until months after the election; citizens deserve to know who is responsible for funding these advertisements today.

When formulating the final rule, we urge you to take into consideration the comments of broadcasters and do everything possible to find a cost-effective and efficient method for publishing this information online, especially for small- and medium-sized stations.

We urge the FCC to act swiftly and decisively to make the entire public inspection file readily available to the public, by posting the information in an online, searchable database. The contents of the political file must be included, since that information is necessary for the public to know the truth behind who is funding campaign ads. While acting quickly to establish the new

rules, we ask that the FCC make every effort to limit the administrative burden to broadcasters. The public files need to be taken out of the file cabinet and moved onto the Internet to ensure that the public has easy access to this information.

Sincerely,



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator




Michael Bennet
United States Senator



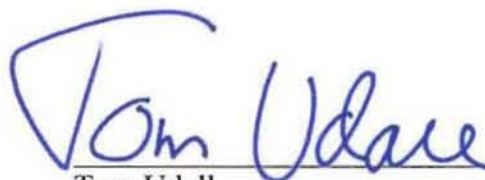
Mark Begich
United States Senator



Daniel Akaka
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

June 14, 2012

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Daniel Akaka
United States Senate
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Akaka:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's efforts to require television broadcasters to post their public files online – including their political files. Your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding.

Congress has mandated through the Communications Act that broadcasters have unique public interest obligations, including the public availability of a broadcast station's political file. The Commission recently acted to ensure that television broadcasters' public files, including the political files, be accessible not just in hard-to-access physical filing cabinets, but online. This requirement not only promotes transparency and accessibility, but based on the record in this proceeding will result in long-term efficiencies and cost savings for broadcasters. I am pleased that the Commission took this important action to modernize its public file procedures in order to make this important information more accessible to the public.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Julius Genachowski



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

June 14, 2012

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Mark Begich
United States Senate
144 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Begich:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's efforts to require television broadcasters to post their public files online – including their political files. Your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding.

Congress has mandated through the Communications Act that broadcasters have unique public interest obligations, including the public availability of a broadcast station's political file. The Commission recently acted to ensure that television broadcasters' public files, including the political files, be accessible not just in hard-to-access physical filing cabinets, but online. This requirement not only promotes transparency and accessibility, but based on the record in this proceeding will result in long-term efficiencies and cost savings for broadcasters. I am pleased that the Commission took this important action to modernize its public file procedures in order to make this important information more accessible to the public.

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Julius Genachowski



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

June 14, 2012

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Bennet:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's efforts to require television broadcasters to post their public files online – including their political files. Your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding.

Congress has mandated through the Communications Act that broadcasters have unique public interest obligations, including the public availability of a broadcast station's political file. The Commission recently acted to ensure that television broadcasters' public files, including the political files, be accessible not just in hard-to-access physical filing cabinets, but online. This requirement not only promotes transparency and accessibility, but based on the record in this proceeding will result in long-term efficiencies and cost savings for broadcasters. I am pleased that the Commission took this important action to modernize its public file procedures in order to make this important information more accessible to the public.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

June 14, 2012

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Al Franken
United States Senate
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Franken:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's efforts to require television broadcasters to post their public files online – including their political files. Your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding.

Congress has mandated through the Communications Act that broadcasters have unique public interest obligations, including the public availability of a broadcast station's political file. The Commission recently acted to ensure that television broadcasters' public files, including the political files, be accessible not just in hard-to-access physical filing cabinets, but online. This requirement not only promotes transparency and accessibility, but based on the record in this proceeding will result in long-term efficiencies and cost savings for broadcasters. I am pleased that the Commission took this important action to modernize its public file procedures in order to make this important information more accessible to the public.

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Julius Genachowski



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

June 14, 2012

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Merkley:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's efforts to require television broadcasters to post their public files online – including their political files. Your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding.

Congress has mandated through the Communications Act that broadcasters have unique public interest obligations, including the public availability of a broadcast station's political file. The Commission recently acted to ensure that television broadcasters' public files, including the political files, be accessible not just in hard-to-access physical filing cabinets, but online. This requirement not only promotes transparency and accessibility, but based on the record in this proceeding will result in long-term efficiencies and cost savings for broadcasters. I am pleased that the Commission took this important action to modernize its public file procedures in order to make this important information more accessible to the public.

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Julius Genachowski



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

June 14, 2012

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Jon Tester
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Tester:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's efforts to require television broadcasters to post their public files online – including their political files. Your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding.

Congress has mandated through the Communications Act that broadcasters have unique public interest obligations, including the public availability of a broadcast station's political file. The Commission recently acted to ensure that television broadcasters' public files, including the political files, be accessible not just in hard-to-access physical filing cabinets, but online. This requirement not only promotes transparency and accessibility, but based on the record in this proceeding will result in long-term efficiencies and cost savings for broadcasters. I am pleased that the Commission took this important action to modernize its public file procedures in order to make this important information more accessible to the public.

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Julius Genachowski



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

June 14, 2012

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Udall:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's efforts to require television broadcasters to post their public files online – including their political files. Your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding.

Congress has mandated through the Communications Act that broadcasters have unique public interest obligations, including the public availability of a broadcast station's political file. The Commission recently acted to ensure that television broadcasters' public files, including the political files, be accessible not just in hard-to-access physical filing cabinets, but online. This requirement not only promotes transparency and accessibility, but based on the record in this proceeding will result in long-term efficiencies and cost savings for broadcasters. I am pleased that the Commission took this important action to modernize its public file procedures in order to make this important information more accessible to the public.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

June 14, 2012

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senate
502 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Whitehouse:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's efforts to require television broadcasters to post their public files online – including their political files. Your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding.

Congress has mandated through the Communications Act that broadcasters have unique public interest obligations, including the public availability of a broadcast station's political file. The Commission recently acted to ensure that television broadcasters' public files, including the political files, be accessible not just in hard-to-access physical filing cabinets, but online. This requirement not only promotes transparency and accessibility, but based on the record in this proceeding will result in long-term efficiencies and cost savings for broadcasters. I am pleased that the Commission took this important action to modernize its public file procedures in order to make this important information more accessible to the public.

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